

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9653
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

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CORRECTED COPY (MRN 1519 VICE 1510)

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, SS, MO, MR
SUBJ: SAHARA WATCH: OUM DREIGA BATTLE

1. WELL INFORMED WESTERN MILITARY ATTACHE HAS
PROVIDED US WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS, UP TO JUNE
6, OF BATTLE BEING WAGED NEAR OUM DREIGA IN MOROC-
CAN CONTROLLED PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA BETWEEN
POLISARIO FORCES ON ONE HAND AND MOROCCAN AND
MAURITANIAN MILITARY UNITS ON OTHER.

2. DURING RECENT VISIT OF MAURITANIAN CHIEF OF
STAFF TO RABAT, PLANS WERE MADE FOR MAJOR OPERA-
TION AGAINST POLISARIO FORCES BASED AT OUM DREIGA.
O/A JUNE 1, FOUR MOROCCAN, AND FOUR MAURITANIAN BATTALION-SIZE
UNITS (CALLED SOUS GROUPEMENT TACTIQUES IN
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MAURITANIAN PARLANCE) BEGAN ALL-OUT ASSAULT
ON POLISARIO UNITS. OPERATION WAS ASSISTED BY
FOUR MOROCCAN F-5S BASED AT NOUADHOBOW AS WELL
AS OTHER F-5S AT EL AYOUN AND SMARA, MOROCCAN

PAYS FROM DAKHLA, THREE MAURITANIAN DEFENDERS AND
THREE TO FOUR MOROCCAN HELICOPTERS WITH RECONNAIS-

SANCE PERFORMED BY TWO FRENCH BREGUETS (FRENCH JAGUARS HAD NOT INTERVENED IN BATTLE AS OF JUNE 6). TOTAL AIRCRAFT INVOLVED AROUND 20.

2. ONE OF FOUR MAURITANIAN BATTALIONS INVOLVED IN OPERATION WAS ORDERED TO PURSUE POLISARIO FORCE WHICH HAD MOVED SOUTH AWAY FROM OUM DREIGA. THIS UNIT FELL INTO AN AMBUSH NEAR AGUENIT AND, ALTHOUGH IT OUTNUMBERED POLISARIO AMBUSH BY 40 VEHICLES TO 20, WAS ROUTED WITH AN ESTIMATED 15 DEAD AND 15 CAPTURED. SOURCE COMMENTED THAT MAURITANIAN BATTALION LACKED WILL TO FIGHT; IT HAD BEEN HELD UP FOR 3 HOURS BY 3 POLISARIO VEHICLES WHILE MAIN POLISARIO FORCE PREPARED AMBUSH. BATTALION RETIREEIN DISORDER TO F'DERICK.

3. BATTLE BETWEEN MOROCCANS AND POLISARIOIN OUM DREIGA REGION IS FIERCE, AND BOTH SIDES SAID TO BE SUSTAINING HEAVY CASUALTIES. ONE MOROCCAN F-5 HAS BEEN SHOT DOWN BY SAM-7 AND ITS PILOT, A MASTER SERGEANT (SERGENT CHEF) TAKEN PRISONER. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT MOROCCANS HAVE NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN JOINING BATTLE WITH MAIN POLISARIO UNITS IN OUM DREIGA WHICH ARE SLIGHTLY TO NORTHEAST OF AREA IN WHICH FIGHTING WAS UNDERWAY AS OF JUNE 6. DUNBAR

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